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DSSD CENSUS 2000 PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM SERIES #O-9

MEMORANDUM FOR Brian Monaghan
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Attention: Management Training Branch
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Subject: Service-Based Enumeration Observation Trip Report

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) is to enumerate people without housing who may be missed in the traditional enumeration of housing units and group quarters. The SBE was conducted over a three day period. Emergency shelters were enumerated on Monday, March 27, soup kitchens and mobile food vans were enumerated on Tuesday, March 28, and on Wednesday, March 29, we enumerated targeted nonsheltered outdoor locations.

This memorandum documents my observation of the Service-Based Enumeration operations in Oakland, California on March 27 through March 29, 2000.

II. OBSERVATIONS

Soup Kitchen Training

My first observation was a soup kitchen enumerator training session. Three experienced crewleaders were to conduct the training with six newly hired crewleaders assisting when necessary. The first two hours were spent completing payroll paperwork and swearing in new employees. While there was verbatim training for this, the trainers were either unaware of this or decided not to use it.

Soon after the crewleader began the verbatim soup kitchen enumerator training, he discovered that the soup kitchen enumerator workbook had not been included in the training materials. The Field Operations Supervisor (FOS) in charge of soup kitchen enumeration made a call to the LCO and was told that the workbooks had not arrived at the LCO. Since the verbatim training referenced the workbook several times, the trainers decided to train the enumerators by reading through the soup kitchen enumerator job aid with them.

During the training session, the FOS in charge of soup kitchen enumeration announced that the LCO had not received any of the Individual Census Questionnaires (ICQs) needed to complete the enumeration and that office staff were currently xeroxing 4,000 copies of the short form ICQ. It also was announced that there would be no long form sample. It was not clear to me where this decision originated.

Once the trainer had read through most of the soup kitchen enumerator job aid, he instructed each trainee to find a partner and practice interviewing one another. At this point I had to leave the training session before it ended so that I could observe emergency shelter enumeration.

Emergency Shelter Enumeration

When I arrived at the first emergency shelter, the enumerator was told that the contact person had made arrangements during the advance visit to schedule the enumeration on the following night (Tuesday) because all of the residents would be present for a weekly meeting. The enumerator checked the Group Quarters Enumeration Record and did indeed see a message in the notes section. The crew leader apologized for the mistake and said she would return the next night.

The second shelter had two separate shelters within the same building. The first floor served as an emergency shelter for women and children and the second floor was used for transitional housing for women only. Separate enumeration teams were sent to each shelter in order to keep the materials separate.

The enumerator for the transitional housing shelter told us that she and another enumerator were supposed to conduct the enumeration at the transitional housing but the other enumerator had not shown up and she had the enumeration materials with her. The crew leader then left to find a phone and try and locate the enumerator.

Next I observed the enumeration at the emergency shelter for women and children. Because I was upstairs when the enumerators began, I do not know if the service provider asked the clients to cooperate. The enumerators handed out the questionnaires to the clients and in some cases conducted the interview. The clients were very cooperative, even the ones who had long forms to complete. The enumerators did question whether they were supposed to enumerate the children and agreed among themselves that they should.

Since the missing enumerator had not shown up, the crew leader requested that the enumerators from the downstairs emergency shelter use their extra materials and enumerate the transitional shelter upstairs. The service provider made an announcement asking the clients to cooperate. The enumerators passed out the questionnaires and in some cases the respondents asked them to conduct an interview. The one person who did receive a long form complained but did complete the questionnaire. One client refused to give any information and the service provider was able to furnish the information from administrative records. There were several Census 2000 posters displayed.

Soup Kitchen/Mobile Food Van Enumeration

When I arrived to the first mobile food van I was to observe, I discovered that although there had been an advance visit, the mobile food van did not show up as expected. The enumerators were quickly rerouted to enumerate at a soup kitchen that had yet to be assigned because of a staffing shortage.

The soup kitchen I visited had already begun serving clients before I arrived. The enumerators had a table with posters set up off to the side of the entrance. The clients arrived on a flow basis and as they would come through the entrance an enumerator would begin the interview. The clients were cooperative.

Mobile Food Van/Targeted Nonsheltered Outdoor Location Enumeration

The city provided a van for the enumerators to follow a mobile food van as it provided food and clothes to persons living in targeted nonsheltered outdoor locations. The service provider encouraged the clients to cooperate with the enumerators and waited until the enumeration was completed at each stop before going to the next location. The city was also giving away coupons for \$5 worth of food at McDonalds to clients who were enumerated. Throughout the entire night I observed only one person refuse to be interviewed and another enumerator was able to convert him.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Soup Kitchen Training

The payroll section of the training was very chaotic, especially since newly hired personnel were training new employees on payroll. Several new hires were asked questions concerning payroll deductions and withholding tax to which they did not know the answer. They should not have been put in that position. If payroll cannot be separated from operational training than perhaps one experienced person should do this part of the training since new hires are not versed in this subject.

It was regrettable that the workbooks were not shipped in time for the training. The job aid does not include examples of some forms the enumerators will be using nor does it explain in the detail needed to have a complete understanding of the operation and what it should accomplish.

I was told that the soup kitchen training film was not sent to the LCO either. While it should not be used in place of the training it certainly would have been extremely useful in this scenario because it would have given the enumerators an idea of what they could expect.

Emergency Shelter Enumeration

In the case of the missing enumerator, it turned out that she had been in an automobile accident on her way to the emergency shelter. I was very impressed with how the crew leader handled the situation by simply asking the other team to enumerate the shelter.

The fact that children are to be enumerated needs to be emphasized. Adding this to the specific examples given during the review or perhaps including this in the video is a possibility.

Soup Kitchen/Mobile Food Van Enumeration

I do not know why this LCO did not receive the ICQs in time for the enumeration. I believe the reasoning behind only xeroxing short form ICQs was that at least everyone would be counted. This decision will compromise the poverty data.

It was obvious to me that the LCO staff had spent a great deal of time cultivating a close relationship with the homeless advocates and the city partnership specialist. The preparation and the advance visits were evidenced by the support of the service provider at each shelter, soup kitchen, soup kitchen, and mobile food van location. I am convinced that the success of the operation would not have been possible without the encouragement of the service provider.

I was very impressed by the enthusiasm of the enumerators to do a good job. It was obvious to me that they take great pride in their work.

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